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ABSTRACT

Some of the major administrative factors that will require attention by small colleges and universities as they develop policy and general procedures for the administration of research, grants, and contracts are considered. Management of research, grants, and contracts is a process that involves the review and approval of proposals; project coordination; the implementation matters of facilities and equipment, personnel, and overhead; and matters related to the monitoring and evaluation of contract obligations. Sponsored research includes all forms of organized inquiry that are separately budgeted with the financial accounting system of the institution. Faculty research grants are awards usually made and/or administered by an institution's research committee, and the intent is to serve as a stimulus for the development of a sponsored research proposal. Three prevalent forms of administrative organization for research, grants, and contracts are: separate foundation or corporation, decentralization, and centralized services. A list of suggested activities for an office of sponsored programs, and a list of matters that could be addressed in policy statements to guide research, grants, and contracts activities are presented. A checklist to aid in the preparation and planning of management process for grants/contracts administration is included, along with a list of factors to be considered in the review of proposals and/or for guidance in the negotiation of agreements. (SW)

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POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCH, GRANTS, AND CONTRACTS
ADMINISTRATION IN THE SMALL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

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ADMINISTRATION IN THE SMALL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to briefly identify and outline the concerns, issues, and aspects of the administration of research, grants, and contracts as these matters relate to planning and the establishing of institutional policy. The intention is to identify specific elements which will require study and discussion by administrators and faculty as an institution goes about the process of trying to establish a systematic approach to the administration of research, grants, and contracts. This paper raises questions and issues; it does not prescribe a best method or path to follow. The assumption is made that if administrators and faculty give appropriate consideration to the kinds of questions and concerns raised in this paper, they may achieve considerable progress in establishing useful policies and procedures to govern the administration of research, grants, and contracts.

Seeking and obtaining research and other kinds of grants and contracts in small institutions where such activity is less routine than at larger institutions, may generate problems. There may be a need to give careful thought to institution mission and objectives. Management personnel will need to think in terms of supportive services for research, and a well-defined, clearly articulated management process will need to be created to enhance planning and decision-making.

DEFINITIONS

A. Research, Grants, and Contract Administration/Management

Research, grants, and contracts administration/management is a series of events which may be regarded as a process. Basically, the events or activities in the process include: the review and approval of proposals; project coordination; the implementation matters of facilities and equipment, personnel, and overhead; and, matters related to the monitoring and evaluation of contract obligations.

B. Sponsored Research

Sponsored research includes all forms of organized inquiry that are separately budgeted within the financial accounting system of the institution. Sponsored research includes knowledge seeking activities that may fall into one or more of the following categories:

Basic - that research which is inquiry seeking principles and relationships underlying new knowledge.

Applied - study which demonstrates the practical application of knowledge.

Developmental - the reduction of knowledge to practice, usually in the form of useful materials, devices, and processes.

C. Faculty Research Grants

These awards are usually made and/or administered by an institution's research committee. Typically, the intent is to serve as a stimulus for the development of a sponsored research proposal. Other important purposes for the award include released time, finalizing of a research manuscript, and special travel related to research activities.

ORGANIZATION

A. General

The chief executive officer of the institution may delegate responsibilities to various institution members for the effective administration of functions and tasks related to the processing of research, grants, and contracts. This delegation is presumably based upon clearly stated policies and the concomitant delineation of roles and responsibilities to participants. There is no one best way to organize for these tasks.

As an aid to the chief executive officer and/or the chief academic officer, there is sometimes created a Research Committee or Research Board for the general overview of sponsored research, grants and contracts. A committee or board may be a standing committee of the institution's governance system with membership taken from both the faculty and central administration. The functions of such a committee or board may include: periodic review and development of policy statements; review of procedures governing preparation and approval of proposals; and the like.

B. Administrative Organization

The basic administrative organization for research, grants, and contracts may take one of several forms, none of which is regarded as best. The institution must decide which form of administrative organization fits best with institution capabilities, interests, limitations, and aspirations. There are three prevalent forms of administrative organization.

1. Separate Foundation or Corporation

There are institutions (such as the State University of New York, Old Dominion University) which have separate foundations or corporations for the purpose of accepting

and carrying out sponsored research, grants, and contracts. These entities may, for state owned institutions, offer greater flexibility regarding state fiscal regulations and purchasing procedures, however, operating and contractual relationships between the foundation or corporate entity and the institution served must be carefully stated and be clearly understood by all parties and agencies involved.

2. Decentralization

This form finds individual academic departments, divisions, schools, or colleges responsible for certain activities, typically those activities having to do with the generation of proposals in accordance with general guidelines and the assurance-providing activities having to do with personnel competence and availability, and technical adequacy of the proposals. The institution's business office is responsible for business and financial details (accounting, cost control, overhead determination, etc.). Further, the institution's legal counsel may be responsible for such matters as legal sufficiency of contracts, patent rights, etc.

3. Centralized Services

In many institutions, particularly large ones, there exists an office for sponsored programs. The head of the office usually reports to either the chief academic officer or the senior business officer. In some cases the office head has the title of Director of Research or Vice President for Research, and may report to the chief executive officer.

Functions of the office have to do with individual project management responsibilities to include preparation and submission of proposals, negotiation, monitoring and reporting, and close out. Sometimes accounting and cost control functions are housed within the office of sponsored programs and sometimes they are housed in a separate office.

C. Office of Sponsored Programs

Much of what has been written on the subject of organizing for the administration of research, grants, and contracts has been of a highly prescriptive nature as though there were "best" ways of doing things, particularly as the prescription relates to the tasks and functions of a centralized office of sponsored programs. When reviewing various lists of things suggested as appropriate for an office of sponsored programs, one is struck by the overlap among lists. Below is a list of suggested activities which may be undertaken by an office of sponsored programs. The list is an amalgamation of items taken from several prescriptive lists propounded in publications of several organizations concerned with matters related to sponsored programs. The list of suggested activities may be used as a generator of discussion at the central administration level regarding necessary activities supportive of the overall administration of research, grants, and contracts, particularly the generative, proactive activities which may serve to stimulate the preparation of proposals.

- *disseminate research opportunity information and related data
- *train faculty members in proposal preparation
- *serve as communication link with funding agencies
- *screen proposals in keeping with institutional policies and procedures
- *encourage research in areas of emerging need
- *provide data on current research being performed in the institution

- *brief faculty members on research funding trends
- *provide liaison with the post grants administrator
- *edit proposals, monitor budgets
- *keep needed records
- *guide institution policy on research, grants, and contracts
- *interpret federal government regulations and procedures

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

A. Beginning

As a beginning, institution presidents, chief academic officers and other administrators need to develop a set of policy statements which will serve to guide research, grants, and contracts activities. These statements need to address matters such as:

1. Relationship of research, grants, and contracts activities to the general mission and purpose of the institution.
2. Relationship of research, grants, and contracts (RGC) activities of the instructional programs and academic policies.
3. Reasons for the involvement of faculty and staff in RGC activity.
4. Reasons for RGC activity to be undertaken by the institution in view of other institution needs and priorities.
5. Relationship of the financial rationale for RGC activity to the general instructional mission of the institution and the development of faculty and students.
6. General specification of the institutional criteria for judging RGC proposals to include identification of governance procedures and identification of roles and responsibilities of institution administrative officers.
7. Delineation of present institution policies and procedures (where present) regarding matters such as overhead, copyrights, protection of human subjects, and consultation practices of faculty.

B. Management Elements

The central administration and an interim research advisory committee may wish to address the following matters pursuant to the articulation

of management processes for the administration of research, grants, and contracts. Regardless of the means chosen to address these matters, the matters will need to be addressed and procedures, guidelines, and policies will need to be developed.

1. Specification of legal requirements and ethical considerations.
2. Selection/approval of project directors.
3. Writing of proposals for sponsored activities.
4. Preparation of proposals to include typing, editing, copying, clarifying technical details, and delivery of proposals.
5. Approval, at institutional level, of proposals through appropriate institutional channels.
6. Negotiation of contracts.
7. Protection of the rights of researchers.
8. Provision of incentives such as seed grants, released time, etc., to encourage faculty initiatives in research, grants, and contracts activity.
9. Management of the fiscal, technical, logistical, legal and related details of projects.
10. Closing out projects.
11. Evaluation of projects.

C. Planning to Administer Sponsored Research

The American Council on Education has prepared a checklist which may be helpful to those individuals who are preparing and planning management processes for the administration of sponsored research grants, and contracts activity. The checklist may serve as a general outline for the policy and procedures manual or handbook. The items will need to be addressed at some point in the development of the administrative organization for sponsored activities.

1. Institutional mission, functions, and general policies.
2. Policies governing sponsored research.
3. Relation of research to academic processes of the institution.
4. Advancement of institutional status, prestige, and research capabilities.
5. Professional advancement of faculty members.
6. Qualifications of researchers and peer relationships.
7. Promotion and tenure policies.
8. Student participation in sponsored research projects.
9. Level of departmental and college involvements in determining the balance between teaching and research and other governance questions.

10. Relation between research units and the institution.
11. Financial preconditions before undertaking a project.
12. Grant and contract administration.
13. Allocation of financial resources, including cost recovery and overhead.
14. Compensation of investigators and other payments.
15. Staff support in research administration.
16. Cooperation among departments.
17. Relationship among competing political considerations.
18. Compatibility between public and private sector considerations.
19. Ownership of research outcomes.
20. Conflict-of-interest rules.
21. Physical facilities, including renovation.
22. Animal care.
23. Communications.
24. Travel.
25. Computing services and data processing.
26. Accounting and financial reporting.
27. Reporting of time requirements.
28. Electronic, machine, and other shops.
29. Installation and maintenance of equipment and utilities.
30. Installation and calibration of instruments.
31. Purchasing.
32. Excess and surplus equipment, including disposal.
33. Hazardous materials and their handling.
34. Human subjects and their treatment.
35. Liability protection.
36. Library and information services.
37. Occupational safety.
38. Patents and copyrights.
39. Technical support personnel.
40. Institutional foundations to administer funds.
41. Proposal preparation.
42. Radiation safety.
43. Stockrooms.

D. Proposal Review/Negotiation

The National Association of College and University Business Officers has prepared a list of factors to be considered in the review of proposals and/or for guidance in the negotiation of agreements. The list of factors is not an exhaustive list but it does touch upon many important aspects of the administration of research, grants, and contracts. The list of factors could be used as a background document for a planning or task group preparing to develop policies and procedures for the administration of research, grants, and contracts. The factors include:

1. Eligibility of the Investigator - Is the person initiating the proposal eligible under the rules of the institution to be a principal investigator?
2. Academic Program - Does the proposal contribute to the academic program of the institution? For example, does it provide training and support of students?
3. Completeness - Does the proposal include all information required by the sponsoring agency or follow a prescribed format?
4. Technical Reports and Supervision - Are the number, frequency, and comprehensiveness of periodic technical reports and extent of sponsor supervision satisfactory?
5. Freedom to Publish - Is the investigator free to publish or not to publish findings without restriction?
6. Percentage of Effort - Is the amount of effort committed by the investigator and others, both on and off campus, appropriate and compatible with their other duties?
7. Budgets - Is the budget sufficiently detailed? Have all direct cost items been covered in the budget, that is, salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publications costs, computer services, consultants, other? Have appropriate increments for all budget categories been calculated for future years?
8. Indirect Cost Rates - Have the institution's indirect cost rates been properly applied and included in the proposed budget?
9. Human Subjects - If the proposed research involves the use of human subjects, does research protocol comply with government requirements and with assurances filed by the institution?
10. Recombinant DNA - If the proposed research involves recombinant DNA, does research protocol comply with government requirements?
11. Care of Laboratory Animals - If any live, vertebrate animals are to be used in the conduct of research, have provisions been made to insure adequate and humane care in accordance with prescribed institutional and legal standards?
12. Health Hazards - In the event that the proposed activity contemplates use of materials or devices that may pose a health hazard, such as radioactive materials or carcinogens, is there evidence of appropriate planning for safety and control and compliance with legal standards?

13. Safety and Health - Does the proposed project comply with occupational safety and health laws?
14. Security Restrictions - If there is a security restriction, does this conflict with institutional policy?
15. Insurance - Does the proposed activity pose any special property, liability, or other insurance questions?
16. Special Licenses - Have necessary special licenses been obtained?
17. Patent Agreements - Have the sponsor's patent terms been considered? Are they compatible with the institution's policy on patents? Are patent agreements on file, where required, for all persons who may be in a position to conceive, make, or first use inventions, improvements, or discoveries under the project?
18. Copyrights and Rights in Data - Have the sponsor's copyright and rights in data terms been considered? Are they acceptable?
19. New Staff - Will the proposed activity require new staff? Is such expansion consistent with the institution's plans and available funds?
20. Space and Equipment - Can the project be housed within existing space? Is it adequately equipped? If not, are requirements for additional or renovated space and equipment consistent with the institution's plans and available funds?
21. Cost Sharing - Where cost-sharing commitments are in the proposal, are they accurate, consistent with the institution's plans and budgets, and reasonable in terms of any minimum requirements that the sponsor may have?
22. Long-Term Commitments - Does the proposal commit the institution to continue the proposed activity beyond the period of sponsor funding? Beyond anticipated retirement or resignation date of principal investigator? If so, do budgeting and planning give appropriate support to all such commitments?

SUMMARY

This brief paper presents some of the major administrative factors which will require attention at the institutional level as policy and general procedures are developed to address the administration of research, grants, and contracts. No attempt was made to address the myriad of elements related to financial management,

accounting, and the legal issues which are present in an operating system.

If and when an institution works through the process of developing sufficient policy to direct activity and has some knowledge of processes and procedures essential to begin to effectively manage activities it is ready to proceed to the next developmental stage, namely, the operationalization of the needed processes and procedures.

The chief executive officer may establish a task force or advisory committee in the initial stages of policy development so that a broad perspective may be obtained with regard to the interests of the faculty and administration. The group may present a set of recommendations to the chief executive which may serve as a guide for future action.

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